

Visual Analysis/Museum Paper

Attend a professional exhibition including contemporary works made between 1970 and the present day, and choose one work seen in person to visually analyze. This paper is preparation for your Research Paper, and you are therefore encouraged to view works that you also plan to write about so that you may use the visual analysis that you work on here as a building block to the analysis you will expand upon in your Research Paper. Before you venture out to see contemporary works of art, please read Marjorie Munsterberg's explanation of visual description at, <http://writingaboutart.org/pages/visualdesc.html>.

Begin by describing what you see, drawing the viewer's attention to key elements (objects, subjects, symbols) in the composition. Identify three to five visual elements (subjects, objects, textures, lines, differing contrast, etc.) in the work. Discuss the work's subjects. What are the main components, what is represented, who is portrayed, where is the scene set? While you may want to keep your visual description concise, remember that you cannot assume that what you are seeing / experiencing is universal. In other words, be careful not to make assumptions!

Next, identify important formal elements in the work. While this may feel descriptive, what you're focusing on in this section are the qualities and characteristics of compositional elements such as perspective, balance, rhythm, and symmetry, as well the qualities and characteristics of the expression such as line, shadow, color, and texture. Ask yourself whether the work is abstract or realistic, what style is it made, and other physical aspects.

Finally, connect your private experience with the work with its visual elements (description, subjects, and form). How do the visual elements of the works build meaning? What connections to the work's historical context and current concerns relate to what you see? Use at least two sources discovered in your search to add either alternative perspective to your analysis, or to further develop a point that you are making. Cite your sources using Chicago Manual of Style footnotes (no bibliography)

Visual Analysis/Museum Paper Rubric	
The basics (artist, title, date, etc.)	out of 5 points
Consideration of subject	out of 10 points
Description of physical properties	out of 10 points
Personal experience	out of 10 points
Writing style	out of 15 points
Total	out of 50 points